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REVOLUTIONARY PENSION DECLARATIONS' FROM PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VA.

(FROM COPIES ON FILE AT PITTSYLVANIA C. H., CHATHAM,
VA.)

JOSEPH SMITH.

State of Virginia,
Pittsylvania County.

On this 17th day of Sept. 1832, Personally appeared in open Court before Stephen Coleman, Thom. Shelton, Jno. D. Adams, & Wm. M. Williams, the court of Pitts. now sitting, Joseph Smith a resident of the County of Pitts. & state aforesaid, aged Sixty-nine years, who on his Oath made the following declaration:

That he entered the service of the United States early in the month of January 1781 as a Substitute for Harmon Miller and marched from the County of Halifax in the State of Virginia in a Company of drafted Militia which was Commanded by Capt. Charles Wall and Lieut. Bates & Ensign Daniel Wilson, Crossed Staunton River at Bibbs Ferry & went thro' the Counties of Charlotte, Lunenburg, Notoway and Dinwiddie by the Long Ordinary and thro' the Town of Petersburg to Cabin Point on the James River, there joined the Regiment under the Command of Major Pennell [Pannill?] & Col Holcombe² & was stationed at that place about 6 weeks,

¹ Under the United States pension law in effect in 1832, applicants for pensions had to prove their claims by proper evidence produced before local courts. One copy of the "declaration" as it was called, was sent to the Commissioner in Washington and another filed among the records of the court. As the act in operation in 1832 greatly widened the scope of pension legislation, there were for the first time many applicants who had served in the militia. Where these declarations have been preserved they give much interesting information in regard to the services of the militia—information which is hardly to be found elsewhere.

² Col. John Holcombe, of Prince Edward county. This campaign was that of Arnold's first invasion of Virginia.

then marched down the country & joined Genl. Mulenburg's Brigade near Portsmouth, Va. & remained with him until his term of service, being three months, expired. He was discharged by Ensign Wilson about the 1st of April 1781, that his discharge is lost & cannot be found & that he does not know a person living that served with him but has been proved by Capt. John Walters who lived a close neighbor to him.

Soon after he returned home from the above described town he again entered the service of the U. S. as a Substitute for his Father, James Smith & marched from the said County of Halifax sometime in the month of April 1781, in a Company of drafted Militia which was Commanded by Capt. William Clark to Point of fork on James River, at that place he joined the Regiment Commanded by Col. Tucker³ in Genl. Lawson's Brigade & continued under the said Officers marching in Various directions untill he arrived at Morben Hills below Richmond & remained at that place until his term of service expired, being upwards of three months, he was discharged at that place by Col'o Priddy the 28th day of July 1781. That Identical discharge is now in his possession & herewith presented to the Court.

He was born in the State of Maryland he supposes in the year 1763, has no record of his age. He lived in the County of Halifax, State of Va. when he entered the service of the United States. He lived in the County of Halifax five years after the War ended, then moved to the County of Pittsylvania, Virginia, & has lived in this County ever since. Sworn to & subscribed this day & year aforesaid. JOSEPH SMITH.

WILLIAM DOVE.

State of Virginia. Pittsylvania County.

On the 22nd day of August 1832, personally appeared in

³Col. St. George Tucker and Brigadier General Robert Lawson. In March, 1781, Arnold was reinforced at Portsmouth by Phillips, and on April 18th the combined forces left that place and advanced up James River. They were later joined by Cornwallis. On July 28th, 1781, the English forces were again at Portsmouth to which they had retreated.

open Court before Wm. L. Pannill, Daniel Coleman, Coleman D. Bennett, & David H. Clark, the Court of Pittsylvania County now sitting, William Dove, a resident of Camden Parish, in the County of Pittsylvania & state of Virginia, aged 74, who on his oath made the following declaration.

That he was born in Charles County Maryland the 27th Nov. 1758, and moved to Fairfax County, Va., when quite young with his parents.

That in Aug. 1777 when the British landed, at the head of Elk River and marched toward Philadelphia, an express arrived at Fairfax County, Va., when he volunteered under Capt. Thomas Pollard, (the name of the Lieut. he forgets); Col. Rumley of Alexandria was commandant of the Reg't, and Seal and Dennis Ramsey⁴ were Captains in the same; the name of the Major he forgets; that in a few days after he volunteered he marched from Alexandria (the place of Rendezvous) thro' Georgetown, Frederick Town, Md. and York town about the line of Maryland & Pennsylvania to Lancaster in Pa.; that there he remained about a week when an express arrived for the troops to join Genl. Washington at Head Quarters, but on the march he was taken with Small Pox & had to lie by for a few days & during his confinement heard the roar of the cannon at the battle of Germantown. After his recovery he regained his company at Genl. Washington's Head Quarters and there remained until his 3 months expired.

That in September 1778 he enlisted as a Marine on board a ship called the Genl. Washington at Alexandria, which was destined to carry despatches to France. Francis Speake, Capt. and Sam'l. Walker Lieut. of the ship, William Sandford Capt. and Wm. Pearson Lieut. of the Marines, and Doctor Wm. Ramsey Surgeon The same month he enlisted he

⁴Dennis Ramsay, of Alexandria, son of William Ramsay, (1716-1785) of Galway, Scotland, who settled at Alexandria as early as 1744. See Hayden's *Virginia Genealogies*, 87, 88 and Brockett's *Lodge of Washington*, 109.

tailed, and arrived in France in unusually short passage of 18 days (which was said to be the quickest passage that ever then had been made). That they remained at a small town called Painbeouf, about 15 miles below Nantes the whole winter. In March they sailed to Brest & joined the French fleet & in April sailed out from Brest in company with about ninety vessels of various nations which were conveyed by the French ships of War out to sea. After getting clear of the coast of France, & leaving the French ships, the Genl. Washington cruised on the coasts of Spain awhile, and returning home, near Cape Henry fell in with and took a British Privateer & brought her into Alexandria the last of June 1779.

That in March 1780 he enlisted on the same vessel as seaman, Sam'l Walker, Capt. and ——— Flagg, Lieut. (no Marines) and sailed for Amsterdam in Holland, conveying some merchant vessels out of the Chesapeake Bay. On the passage the Genl. Washington fell in with & took a large British Merchantman. That he with 7 others was detached to take command of the prize and brought her and 4 prisoners into Philadelphia in July 1780, when she was sold but he never received a cent of the prize money. He then returned home by water to Baltimore & then by land home.

In July 1781 he volunteered under & was appointed Corporal by his old Captain Thomas Pollard; that he forgets the name of his Lieut.; that he marched to the Mobbie [Malvern] Hills below Richmond Va. and his company was there attached to the Command of Col. Mereweather & Major Hardy. Thence they marched to a place called Springfield below Williamsburg, Va. & there he was employed with a guard the most of the time in guarding Burwell's large house⁵ on York River which was in sight of the British shipping; that his 3 months then expired & he returned home with his Captain in October (he thinks early) in 1781. That he never received any discharges having always returned with his officers and he does not think it was customary with any of his

⁵ Probably at Kings Creek, York county, not many miles above Yorktown, where the Burwells owned a large estate.

Captains to give discharges. He was well acquainted with Col'o Hooe, Lawyer Simmes, Capt. Ramsey, Capt. Wm. Ellsey, the Fitzhughs, Masons, & Co'o Broadwater all of whom then lived in Alexandria which was then in Fairfax County.

That he emigrated to Pittsylvania County in 1783 where he has resided ever since and in this section of country is well acquainted with the Hon. Nathaniel H. Claibourn, Member of Congress, William Tunstall, Clerk of Pitts. County, Walter Coles, Esq. a Capt. in the regular Army in the late War & many others to whom he refers respectfully.

his
WM. X DOVE.
mark

WILLIAM DIXON.

State of Virginia,
Pittsylvania County.

On the 22nd day of August 1832 personally appeared before the Court of the County, William Dixon, a resident of said county & state aforesaid, aged 70 years, and made the following declaration.

That he enlisted for three years in the army of the United States in the year 1780 (shortly after the defeat of Genl. Gates) with one Wheatly a recruiting officer and served in Col. Litterell's Regiment of the Continental Line, under the following officers. First Col. Litterell, who having been killed at Lindley's mills was succeeded in command by Col. Read, Major Douglass, Captain Richeson and lastly Capt. Trowton, were the officers under whom he served until peace was declared. He belonged to the Cavalry. At the time of his enlistment he resided near Hillsboro, in Orange County & state of North Carolina, after which he was taken to Litterell's Barracks near Salisbury in the county of Rowan & state aforesaid, where he passed the winter of 1780-81. He was frequently detached with his company to suppress & put down the tories, and on one occasion was led to the Cheraw Hills

in South Carolina, thence up the Pedee & Yadkin Rivers to the Island ford, where a part of Col. Read's force had a brush with the enemy. A few days before the battle of Guilford he was detached together with the rest of his company to repair to Hillsboro for the purpose of preventing the enemy from taking possession of the ammunition.

After the object of their trip was effected they returned & reached the Main Army at a place called the troublesome iron works in Guilford county and state of North Carolina, the first or second night after the battle of Guilford, to which place the Army retreated, it became necessary to destroy or sink the boats & canoes on Dan River between Perkins' & Dix's ferry, he with others was detached for this purpose, being piloted by Dr. Bryant. When peace was declared he returned home. He does not know whether he received a written discharge or not, but recollects well that he received a paper (the contents of which he did not know as he could not read), which he afterwards sold for some money & property. He begs leave to refer to some additional evidence of his claim, now filed in the Treasury department, but which will be transferred to the department of War.

his
WILLIAM X DIXON.
mark

DAVID WRAY.

State of Virginia,
Pittsylvania County.

On the 17th day of September 1832 personally appeared before the County Court of said County David Wray a resident of said County aged 81, who on his oath made the following declaration.

That he volunteered in April or May 1778 during the Revolutionary War on an expedition against the Indians in the Western part of Virginia on the borders of New River. He

went under Capt. Jno. Donlison,⁶ that while on said service he was usually stationed at Lucas's Fort when not in active service. That there were other companies of Militia stationed at different points along said river & adjacent country, each company separate from the others and there was no officer above the grade of captain, the object being to guard the frontier against the Indians.

That said tour was three months & on leaving there he was discharged. That two years thereafter he volunteered in a Militia company from this county then called Henry county, commanded by Capt. Wm. Witcher⁷. That in said company he marched first to Salisbury in N. C. thence to Stone River in South Carolina was there attached to Col. David Mason's⁸ Regiment, Genl. Lincoln's Brigade. That he performed service there for 5 months & was sick at the time a battle was fought on said river. That he never received any written discharge from that place because Col. Mason authorized Capt. Witcher to give said discharge to all his company and it was neglected as they all lived in said county & neighborhood. That he was afterwards called on to guard five hundred prisoners, who were taken by Genl. Morgan at the Battle of the Cow Pens, which said prisoners were guarded from county to county by the militia of each county, and he aided in Guarding them to Bedford county, Virginia, that as soon as

⁶ Captain John Donelson, who afterwards emigrated to Tennessee. See this Magazine, VII, 15.

⁷ Captain William Witcher, of Pittsylvania, was in active service as Captain of Militia as early as 1776.

⁸ David Mason, of Sussex county, member of the House of Burgesses for that county at the sessions of September, 1758, November, 1758, February, 1759, November, 1759, March, 1760, May, 1760, October, 1760, March, 1761, Nov. 1761, January, 1762, March, 1762, Nov. 1762, May, 1763, January, 1764, October, 1764, May, 1765, November, 1766, March, 1767, March, 1768, May, 1769, November, 1769, May, 1770, July, 1771, February, 1772, March, 1773, May, 1774 and June, 1775, and of the Conventions of 1775 and 1776. He was commissioned Colonel 15th Virginia regiment November 12, 1776, and resigned July 31, 1778, but as is shown by this declaration, commanded later a volunteer or militia regiment in the Southern Army.

he returned home he was ordered out to Gilford County North Carolina, under Capt. James Brewer, he was stationed near Gilford Court House & during the battle of Gilford he was a waggon guard, that in this tour he served only seven weeks. That his discharge from said service was written all in one with the others of said company & was taken by a man by the name of Hunt, one of said company.

He further states that he was never in any battle, that he cannot now state the day, month, or year in which he entered the service at the different times mentioned or the precise times he left the same. That there were continental troops at Stone in S. C. to the number of 30,000 [3,000?] the different companies or Regiments he cannot specify. That he can now only remember the names of Genls. Green, Lincoln, & Moultry in the South. That he was born in Brunswick Co. Virginia, date not remembered.

his
DAVID X WRAY.
mark

WILLIAM JEFFRESS.

On the 17th day of Sept. 1832 personally appeared in open court before Stephen Coleman, Jno. D. Adams, Vincent Witcher & Wm. M. Williams, the Court of Pittsylvania now sitting, William Jeffress a resident of said County, of state of Va, aged 74 years, who being duly sworn made the following declaration.

That he enlisted in the Army of the United States early in the year 1777 with Samuel Colston in the County of Richmond, in the State of Virginia for two years, he was attached to Capt. Jeffres' Company of the Va. State line & marched with him to Alexandria, his men were vaccinated at that place for the Small Pox and remained there about two months, then marched thro' Georgetown to Baltimore & staid there about four weeks, then marched thro' Lancaster to the Valley

forge in the State of Pennsylvania, at that place they joined the 15th Regiment under the Command of Major Mercer, in Gen'l Scott's Brigade. He was then put under Lieut. Butler, who soon became Captain in the said 15th Regiment of the Virginia Line, they remained at the said Valley forge during the Winter of 1778, early in the Spring the Army marched to Stone Chimney, on its march he was taken sick, & was sent to the Hospital about five miles from the Valley forge. He was confined there untill the month of June when he joined the said company again in the Main Army at the White plains in the State of New York and remained there until the fall, the British then not far off, the American Army persued them from place to place & had an engagement with them at Brandywine, the American Army was forced to retreat & went to White Marsh, thence it was principally marching in different directions until it took up Winter quarters at.....

That in the Spring following he was discharged having served two years under that enlistment and then returned home in the year 1779—his discharge is lost or mislaid and cannot be found. He does not know a person now living that was in that Service with him.

In the year 1780 he moved from Richmond County to Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in the Winter of 1781 the British were in the State of North Carolina. He volunteered in a Company of Militia and marched from the County of Pittsylvania under Capt. Joshua Stone to Boyd's Ferry on Dan River, from there into the State of North Carolina, marching in various directions until he arrived at the high Rock, Rockingham County, N. C. He was there discharged by Captain Stone in the month of March 1781, the whole time of Service rendered on this tour was 8 or 9 weeks, his discharge is lost and cannot be found and he does not know a person living that was in Service with him at that time.

About the first of August 1781 he was drafted in a Company of Militia and marched from the County of Pittsyl-

vania under Capt. Wm. Dix and Lieut. David Hunt and Ensign Clement McDaniel to Little York and was stationed there in Col Merryweathers' Regiment until Lord Cornwallis Surrendered himself and his Army to Genl. George Washington in the month of Oct. 1781. He was then ordered to march with Capt. Chas. Williams and Lieut. David Hunt to guard the British prisoners taken at Little York to Nolands ferry on the Potomac River. He was discharged verbally by Capt. Charles Williams at the said Noland's ferry, in the month of November 1781, the whole time of service rendered on this tour including the time of traveling home being upwards of four months, the service rendered is proved by Isham Farmer and Lewis Haley who were Soldiers with him in the same Company.

He was born in the County of Richmond, State of Virginia, he supposes in the year 1758, he has no record of his age, he lived in the County of Richmond when he enlisted in the Army of the Revolution in the year 1777.

He lived in the County of Pittsylvania when the War ended and lived in the said County 16 years, then moved to the County of Halifax in the State of Virginia, and lived in that County 15 years, then removed to the County of Pittsylvania and has lived in that County ever since.

his
WILLIAM X JEFFRESS.
mark